

11-20-1867

Series 4. Civil War Reports, Rosters, Etc.: Box 4: Folder 5: Scan 1

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Wolly Springs, Miss. -
Nov. 20th 1863.

Maj Genl W. W. Loring

Sir:

On the morning
of the 20th of July, the Army of
Tennessee was in line of battle
about four miles north of Atlanta
on the south side of Peachtree
Creek, & some two miles from that
place. Genl Hardee's ^{corps} formed the
right, Genl Woods' ^{corps} the center, & Genl Stewart's ^{corps} the left of the line.
~~Genl Loring's~~
Division formed the right of
Stewart's corps. My Brigade formed
the right of Loring's Division, &
connected with Sheatham's Division
on my right. My orders were to be
ready to move at 10 o'clock on the
20th, & to move to the right by
the right flank, following the
Division on my right until it
should halt, when I would also
halt, & face to the front. I was
informed, that my Brigade
would not be moved far to the
right, not more than ~~one~~ half mile,
& would halt, & move down the
Peachtree Ferry road, upon the enemy.
Out to my astonishment, ^{when the movement} in obedience
to my original orders, I followed the
Division on my right some two miles

~~It~~ ~~a~~ half ~~before~~^{before} it halted. My
Brigade was then halted on very
hilly & mountainous ground.

I had examined the ground on
the day before, on ~~either~~^{both} sides of
the Pace's Ferry road where I was
informed, my Brigade would
move, in making the attack.
The order of battle was as follows.
The attack was to begin on the
extreme right of our line, with
Warner's ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ corps. ~~It~~
~~not~~ ~~known~~ ~~which~~ ~~of~~ ~~these~~ ~~corps~~, ~~was~~
~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~right~~. The Division on the
extreme right was to move first,
& when it reached Rock Run creek,
was to wheel to the left & march
down the creek, & attack the
enemy on their left flank. The
second Division was required to
move in the same way about three hun-
dred yards behind the first, but
to its left, in continuation of
the line, ^{of battle} & when it reached the
creek, to observe the same order
in wheeling to the left, & attacking
the enemy on their left flank.
The same order was to be observed
down the entire line, beginning
on the right, & the whole army was

to move in, in Echelon^{'''} by Division,
 & oblique to the left as they moved,
 & wheel to the left on reaching
 Peach Tree Creek. My orders were
 to attack the enemy when they were
 reached in ~~the~~^{my} front, regardless
 of their numbers, & if they were
 fortified to fire bayonets & charge
 their works. The orders were positive,
 & every obstacle was to be overcome.
 These orders were understood to be
 general, & the same to the whole
 army. As soon as the Division
 on my right (Kearney's) had
 moved some three hundred yards
 to the front I moved ^{from our main line of rifles pits} my Brigade
 to the front. ~~At that time I moved my Brigade~~
 Scott's Brigade of
 Loring's Division, was on my
 left, Adams's Brigade of the
 same Division, was out on Picket
 duty, & not brought up until a late
 hour in the evening. After
 advancing through woods for
 about three quarters of a mile,
 I came to an open field in my
 front some half mile wide,
 & ~~very~~^{more} ~~the same~~ in length.
 This field extended about one hundred
 yards ^{beyond the} ~~to my~~ right, & beyond ^{of my brigade} ~~the~~ left.
~~At that time~~ On reaching this

enemy's small arms. When we came
 within about one hundred yards
 of their line, a charge was made,
 & they were driven back in great
 confusion. This line of works was
 taken by these two Brigades, & our
 troops passed beyond the works,
 & drove them back into the woods.
 But, the attack had not been made
 on our right in advance of us,
 or even on a line with us, as the
 order, ^{of} battle directed, & the enemy
 seeing this, flanked us on the
 right, ^{& were about to get} ~~in~~ ^{the} rear of my line,
 which made the position utterly
 untenable ^{as a retreat became necessary} ~~with out as retreat~~,
 to avoid a capture ^{of the whole command} ~~of the whole command~~
~~of the whole command~~. Both Brigades then
 fell back when ^{thus} flanked, to a
 position some six or eight hun-
 dred yards in rear of the
 enemy's line, reformed there,
 & held this ^{later} position until 9 o'clock
 that night, when the whole army
 was withdrawn to the main line
 of ^{our} works in our rear. The enemy
 in ~~from~~ ^{of my Brigade & 2nd} ~~of my Brigade & 2nd~~
 was Genl Hooker's Army Corps,
 as I learned from ^{of battle} Northern News-
 -paper accounts, afterwards published.

^{so that they} could not have anticipated
 this corps ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~backed~~ ^{backed} ~~by~~ ^{by} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~enemy~~ ^{enemy},
 our attack. If it had done so, it could not have been
~~driven from its works~~ ^{driven from its works} ~~back~~ ^{back} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~any~~ ^{any} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~with~~ ^{with}
 heavy loss by my Brigade & Scott's.
 Our troops were ~~with~~ ^{moving forward} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~enemy~~ ^{enemy} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~driving~~ ^{driving} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~enemy~~ ^{enemy} ~~back~~ ^{back} ~~at~~ ^{at} ~~any~~ ^{any} ~~time~~ ^{time} ~~with~~ ^{with}
 officers when they were flanked
 & forced to fall back. Had
 the attack been made on
 our right all along the line
^{& in the} ^{advance of us} as the order of battle directed,
 our success would, ^{in my opinion} have been
 complete, & the enemy's force
 on the south side of Peach
 Creek, would have been
 killed or captured. There was
 but little ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~force~~ ^{force} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~right~~ ^{right} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~left~~ ^{left} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~division~~ ^{division} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Stewart's~~ ^{Stewart's} ~~corps~~ ^{corps} ~~on~~ ^{on} ~~the~~

have been ~~more~~ ^{than} five times
as large as these two Brigades.

Troops were marched into the
field of conflict with more
determination, with up & courage
than my command did on
this occasion. The charge was
made in gallant style on the
enemy's works. The works were
temporary, & not very strong,
but defended ^{with determination &} ~~by the troops~~ ^{by the troops} ~~in charge of them~~
^{courage by the troops} ~~by the troops~~ ^{in charge of them}
~~forces~~. My loss in this engagement
was very heavy, more than half
of my Brigade, as the reports of
the killed & wounded showed.

I had two companies out on
Picket duty, & not in action, & the
number of men actually engaged,
was two hundred & thirty; of
this number six hundred & sixteen
~~killed & wounded~~ were killed
& wounded. A very large
number of the best officers in
the Brigade, ^{fell on} ~~were killed or wounded~~
at a late hour in the evening,
my two companies on Picket duty,
with ~~A~~ Genl Adams's Brigade joined me
in holding the line to which I
had fallen back. This line was
not more than six or eight hundred

yards from ~~that~~ ^{the enemy's line, ~~when~~ reestablished} ~~the enemy's line~~, &
 a brisk fire was kept up from
 both lines during the balance of
 the evening, ^{but no advance was made by either} before falling back
 to ~~the~~ ^{our} main line of works at
 night, as many of our dead &
 wounded were collected from
 the field, ^{I sent to the rear} as could be, with any
 kind of safety to the detachments
^{of troops} so employed. ~~I sent to the rear~~.
 We retired at night to our line of
 defense, ^{some four miles in the rear} without interruption.
 The foregoing report is written
 from memory. My official
 copies of reports, ^{my Regimental} all having been
 lost, ^{subsequently} on the Georgia campaign
 Respectfully submitted.

~~W. S. Featherston~~

~~The official reports, made by
 my Regimental commanders,
 were all subsequently captured
 by the enemy on the ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~the~~
 wagon train, south of Atlanta~~

~~Very respectfully
 W. S. Featherston~~

I regret that I can not without the official
 reports, give the names & rank of the gallant officers
 & privates who lost their lives so gallantly in this battle.

W. S. Featherston

Report of the
Battle of Peach
Tree Creek
near Atlanta Ga.

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